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Call for Ideas/Papers/Speakers/etc.

Editor

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CD-ROMs and the Future from page 22

sional settings.

Philip Kerr, Teton Data Systems:

It is clear online will be the future once the infrastructure is in place. The big question is when that will be. Our prediction is that networks will continue to grow and improve. Networks are, after all, mini online environments. CDs and installations at LAN/WANs will be the best distribution method for the next five years. CDs will incorporate more and more links into online databases and, once fast enough wires are in place, CD as a distribution means will fade away.

Dr. Clifford Butler, Delmar Publishers:

CDs are still efficient as a storage medium; however the Internet is far less expensive and will be the depository of a great deal of content in the future. The trend is toward online delivery methods /companion online web sites for print product. On the horizon is full video, sound, animation and content over fiber optics or other wide-band delivery methods.

Question 4: What changes have you made in marketing multimedia as opposed to marketing books?

Susan Reinhardt, Mosby-Yearbook, Inc.:

One of the biggest differences from book marketing has been the need for demo-ing the product. This has meant outfitting reps with multimedia computers and in some instances producing special sample disks that explain and demo the product in a self-running format. However, in the long run, the importance of demo-ing will decrease — the mediums will mature, customers will have some history with it, confidence levels will build, and hardware will stabilize a bit making the out-of-box experience a more successful one. In some instances, the product is marketed much closer to the actual launch date to avoid the "vaporware" reputation. Packaging is a much more critical issue.

Philip Kerr, Teton Data Systems:

We don't market books. We license material to put on CD and sell CD-ROMs.

Dr. Clifford Butler, Delmar Publishers:

We have been enclosing multimedia within print products and also standalone product. Packaging changes have been the most radical area of change along with pricing decisions which are always in flux with multimedia product. Multimedia product tends to have a shorter life-cycle, so you will see more revisions than with print.

Question 5: How would you describe the trends in pricing for the next decade?

Susan Reinhardt, Mosby-Yearbook, Inc.:

One of the biggest challenges and certainly one of the most crucial issues that face publishers today is our ability to fairly value our content, regardless of the medium. We have become accustomed to the traditional "one book, one price" scenario and the paradigm has shifted. The delicate balance of what the market will pay, what the product will cost to produce, and how many units will be sold isn't as cut and dry as it used to be. But there are a few things that are very evident in health care and one of them is price sensitivity. And it's also evident that it will be a factor in our market for some time to come. The proliferation of "free" information on the Internet will have both a positive and negative effect. Positive because it will make the publishers' filtering process all the more valuable. Negative because there are those who will become accustomed to the reams of information available — valuable or not, and think it should all be free.

Philip Kerr, Teton Data Systems:

Pricing for CDs will drop to the level of book pricing and stabilize there.

Dr. Clifford Butler, Delmar Publishers:

Pricing will continue to be competitive with lower pricing trends of consumer products effecting educational products. Publishers will be faced with the decision of lowering prices during a product's life or adding functionality and content to enhance value to maintain price points.

Question 6: How are sales going compared to your projections?


Susan Reinhardt, Mosby-Yearbook, Inc.:

In context, sales of multimedia and electronic product are increasing exponentially. However, they are still far from achieving the revenue derived from book sales.

Philip Kerr, Teton Data Systems:

Sales for the past two years have been about 30% above projections.

Dr. Clifford Butler, Delmar Publishers:

Sales are ahead of most forecasts on most of our multimedia products ... in some cases double our initial expectations. This is a rapidly changing marketplace being driven by multiple segments of the industry including publishers, educators, computer hardware and software interests, the phone companies and various online services. The consumer is being deluged as never before with technology. 

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The 1996 Charleston Conference — November 7-9, 1996, Charleston, S.C.

Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition: Money Talks

Money talks. It tells publishers and vendors whether they can survive, how many people they need on staff, and what tasks can be done. It tells them what they can publish, and which and how many experiments they can do to develop new products and services. Money tells librarians how many people to employ, what those people can do, and what products and services they can buy. It tells the standards makers what to work on. It talks to all of us all of the time. What is it telling us now?

If you are interested in leading a discussion, acting as a moderator, coordinating the lively lunches or simulation rooms, or would like to make sure we discuss a particular topic, please let us know. The Charleston Conference prides itself on creativity, innovation, flexibility, and informality. If there is something you are interested in doing, please try it out on us. We'll probably like it ...

The Planning Committee for the 1996 Charleston Conference includes Barbara Dean (Fairfax County Public Library), Heather Miller (SUNY-Albany), Katina Strauch (College of Charleston) and Judy Webster (University of Tennessee).

Send ideas by **June 30, 1996**, to Barbara Dean, Technical Operations Center, 4000 Stringfellow Rd., Chantilly, VA 22021. Phone (703)222-3139; fax (703)222-3135. Internet: <bdean@leo.vsla.edu>. 